

RISHWORTH URBAN SANITARY DISTRICT.

Medical Officer's Annual Report


For the Year 1909.

GENTLEMEN,

I beg to present to you my Annual Report for the year 1909.

For a third consecutive year, no cases of Infectious Diseases under the Notification Act have been reported.

Although notifiable infectious diseases have been absent, the district has suffered severely from epidemics of disease which do not come under the Infectious Disease Notification Act. In the earlier part of the year there was an epidemic of German Measles, which, although it was of a very mild type, caused such a serious diminution in the school attendance that it was considered advisable to close the Day School for a fortnight. In June, Measles of the ordinary type was imported into the district, and in July had become epidemic. The disease was of a much severer form than the previous epidemic, and the School was closed about three weeks before the commencement of the summer holidays. As is commonly the case, the epidemic of Measles was quickly followed by one of Whooping Cough. The relationship between Measles and Whooping Cough, although obscure in origin, is well known; both diseases are of microbic origin, although the particular germ has not yet been discovered. In both cases the germ attacks primarily the respiratory tract. Whether there are two distinct micro-organisms or, whether the same micro-organism is capable under modified conditions of giving rise to both diseases we do not yet know. There are some reasons for thinking that it is the same germ, and that its invasion of the upper respiratory tract, (*i.e.*) the Nose, and its extension downwards to the Larynx, Trachæ and Bronchi, are simply effects of one and the same cause. It is singular too, that the most fatal age for Measles and Whooping Cough is between the years of one and two, and the severity of the attacks are lessened each year afterwards. Three Deaths of children between one and two years of age were caused by this particular epidemic.



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The Birth rate is again a low one, and is actually lower than the Death rate. Only 13 Births were registered, and one died within five days of birth. The rate per thousand of estimated population is 14·25.

The Death rate, on the other hand, is higher than last year. 14 deaths occurred among residents in the district, but two took place in the Halifax Infirmary, one the result of an accident. The rate per thousand head of population is 15·5 Three deaths were directly due to the epidemic of Whooping Cough, which I have referred to.

The Infantile Mortality : (*i.e.*) children under twelve months, is satisfactory.

The New Sewage Scheme has not yet worked as satisfactory as it ought to do. This seems to be due to the fact that the Sewage that at present is taken on to the filter bed is not "crude" enough, (*i.e.*) it is deficient in nitrogeneous matter. The defect can probably be overcome by disconnecting the road drains from the Sewage system, and thus rendering the Sewage to be treated more constant in quality and quantity.

A brief survey of ten years as Medical Officer of Health for the district shows that, although the district is small in regard to the population in comparison with most Urban Districts, the requirements of an Urban District have been constantly attended to. During the ten years a public Water Supply has been secured, Sewage Works have been constructed, and in many ways the sanitation of the district has been improved. A great deal however, remains to be done, notably, the improvement of dwelling houses. In many houses there is overcrowding owing to want of sleeping room. The closet arrangements also in certain houses are very bad. The Smoke Nuisance at Booth Wood, the fouling of the " Ryburn " with the effluent from the Paper Works are undoubtedly from a sanitary point of view, not beneficial to the district.

One hopes that another ten years of Sanitary Administration will show still further improvements.

I am, Gentlemen,

Yours respectfully,

W. B. MERCER.

